OBN NEWS

July/August 1993

OBN News, 519 Church Street, Toronto, Ontario M4Y 2C9 Infoline: (416)-925-XTRA ext. 2015 / Fax: (416)-649-1314

The Ontario Bisexual Network (OBN) is a group formed to enable contacts among bisexual people in Ontario, and to help them undertake activities of interest. At present, these activities include: a mailing list, a newsletter, support group meetings, social activities, a political action group, education of others, information sharing, and safe sexuality information. The network's only mandate is to bring people together. — OBN Meeting, August 2, 1990.
This newsletter provides a means of information exchange within OBN-Toronto as well as among bisexual community organizations throughout Ontario. — Meeting of Bisexual Community Groups in Ontario, August 14, 1993.

ONTARIO BI GROUPS MEET

(by Wendy Rogers)

The first annual general meeting of Bisexual community groups in Ontario was held on Saturday, August 14, 1993 in Kitchener-Waterloo.

In attendance were 17 people including representatives from the *Ontario Bisexual Network* in Toronto, members of *CKWBL* (pronounced "quibble") — *Cambridge, Kitchener-Waterloo Bisexual Liberation*, members of *BiVERSE* in Peterborough and representatives from *BEST — Bisexual Essex County Support Team* in Windsor.

The meeting was hosted by Lyn McGuinnis, founder of *CKWBL*. The organizations involved are grateful for the time and energy Lyn put into making this landmark event happen.

By unanimous decision, all present agreed that each community group would continue to make independent decisions as to the style, structure, method and purpose of their respective community group, and that individual differences within the groups would be respected and voiced. This way, to paraphrase Lyn's words, individual community groups would be allowed to "grow out of their own soil".

It was recognized that by breaking away from the outdated model of "consensus building", we are breaking down another form of oppression that requires everyone to agree to a myriad of issues related to bisexuality and lifestyle, and relationships. By breaking down the consensus model we will also be retraining other communities and the media not to expect stereotypical or linear responses from bisexuals as a whole or as individuals.

In short, the mandate of the connection of the Ontario community groups will be that of providing a communications network or web that will join us together as a Bisexual community, providing support, information exchange, and resources, but that will imply differences and texture between the local communities and within each local community.

The mandate written at the top of this newsletter reconfirms the style of the connection among the Ontario community groups.

Each local group will keep their individual names. The Toronto group, started three years ago, will still be known as the *Ontario Bisexual Network (OBN)* but other city and regional groups will use the name *Ontario Bisexual Network* when applying for provincial funding and other Ontario government initatives or provincially-related opportunities. During these joint projects, the Toronto group will be known as the *Ontario Bisexual Network — Toronto* group.

The community groups will also share the use of this newsletter and will begin an electronic mail and fax system to keep each other informed of activities and information.

At the time of this writing, I realize that the Toronto political group *EMBRACE* was not discussed, but it is the opinion of this writer that it would make sense to invite other politically active members in the Ontario Bisexual community to join this Toronto-based action group for Bisexual people whenever they see fit. As it stands, *EMBRACE* has no agenda except as a vehicle and letterhead to allow a variety of "Bisexual Activitist Voices" to speak out.

Similarly, it would follow that the education we provide to community groups and to the general public would take on the texture of those members providing the information at any particular event. For example, members in Kitchener-Waterloo area feel that it is particularly important to educate the police about Bisexuality when addressing bashing and community awareness issues. What we hold in common is the liberation of our lifestyles, as broad, different and individual as they are.

Suggestions were made for more community development such as inviting people to make suggestions on what they would like to see the groups do or develop in relation to programming, asking for input and commitment for time limited projects. A monthly phone net-

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work for new members, rotating responsibilities, and facilitation has also been suggested.

As readers of this newsletter, please give us feedback at any time! New writers welcome.

Mandate Expanded to Include Bisexuals

BEST — Bisexual Essex County Support Team in Windsor has reported that the Pride Day Committee in Windsor will be including BISEXUAL in their title next year. Congratulations on their unanimous decision.

The organizations *CLGRO (Coalition of Lesbian and Gay Rights In Ontario)* and *EGALE (Equality for Lesbians and Gays Everywhere*, a group dedicated to elimination of discrimination based on sexual orientation in federal jurisdiction), now include Bisexuals in their mandate. *CLGRO* will be changing its name at its next general meeting.

As witness to this change in mandate, *CLGRO* recently made a presentation to the Ontario Government to suggest the inclusion of Lesbians, Gay men and Bisexuals in employment equity legislation.

Ron Fox — Special Guest at August 19th OBN Meeting

OBN welcomes Ron Fox to our August 19th meeting in Toronto. Ron is a member of the *Bay Area Bisexual Network* in San Francisco.

Ron is visiting Toronto to attend the American Psychological Association conference. While attending, Ron will be joined by other researchers to be on a panel entitled: "Understanding Bisexuality: Implications for Theory, Research and Practice". The chair and organizer of the panel is Sari Dworkin, Ph.D., President of California State University.

Ron Fox, who is from the California Institute of Integral Studies, will be presenting to the APA his research entitled: "Coming Out Bisexual, Identity, Behaviour and Sexual Orientation Self Disclosure".

Stewart Hayes, M.Ed., of Kent State University, will be presenting a paper entitled: "Empowering Multiple Cultural Identities of Bisexual Women and Men".

Barb Nicely, M.S., of the University of Akron Ohio, will present: "Bisexuality Awareness and Counselling Psychology Training: One Bisexual Woman's Experience".

Paula Rust, Ph.D., of Hamilton, New York, will present: "Lesbian Perspectives of Bisexuality".

We are pleased, and we assume that other Bisexual grassroots organizations internationally must also be, to see that this important work is being done to increase awareness for Les/Gay/Bi and Straight people in the academic communities.

Photographs, Memories, Writings and Research

Over time, the *Ontario Bisexual Network* has developed an archive of collected newsclippings, photos, academic research, personal writings, discussions and publications on Bisexual lives and community.

Wendy is hoping to begin a scrap book soon. If anyone has anything they are willing to contribute, let her know. (Call (416)-925-XTRA ext. 2015 in Toronto).

She'll be sending photographs of our first Annual General Meeting for publication in the next issue of the International Directory of Bisexual Groups, compiled by the *East Coast Bisexual Network* in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Recent and Upcoming Conferences

World Affairs Canada, a youth organization that provides information and education on a variety of issues for people between the ages of 12-28, held a day long workshop on Les/Gay/Bi isues on August 9, 1993. Many thanks to the members of the Bisexual community who lent their time and effort to this event.

Coming up this fall are conferences in Nottingham, England, in San Diego, California, and in the Atlantic Provinces.

The Department of History at York University in North York, Ontario is preparing for a conference on Les/Gay/Bi history January 14-15, 1994 and is currently calling for submissions.

The *Ontario Bisexual Network* receives all the latest information on conferences of interest to the Bisexual community. For more information speak to Wendy (call the OBN Information line at (416)-925-XTRA, ext 2015) or pick up the information on our display table at regular OBN group meetings in Toronto.

Diversity No Longer Meeting Regularly

In our last newsletter, we reported that *Diversity*, a Toronto-based networking and discussion group for people of all sexual orientations, was meeting regularly. This is no longer the case, due to a shift in time priorities.

If anyone is interested in planning special *Diversity* events around the concept of diverse communities and acceptance, please call the *Diversity* information line at (416)-925-XTRA, ext. 2049 in Toronto for more information.

Ontario Bisexual Community Group Addresses

BEST — Bisexual Essex County Support Team, Tecumseh South Postal Outlet, P.O. Box 21004, Tecumseh, Ontario N8N 4S1.

BiVERSE, 290 Rubidge St., Peterborough, Ontario K9J 3P4.

CKWBL — Cambridge, Kitchener-Waterloo Bisexual Liberation, P.O. Box 28002, Parkdale Postal Outlet, Waterloo, Ontario N2L 6J8.

Ontario Bisexual Network, 519 Church St., Toronto, Ontario M4Y 2C9. Tel: (416)-925-XTRA, ext. 2015. Fax: (416)-649-1314.

OBN Meeting Times

OBN Meetings are held on the first Thursday of every month, from 6 to 8 p.m., and on the third Thursday of every month from 8-10 pm, at the 519 Church St. Community Centre in Toronto (just north of Wellesley St.). Newsletters are available at the 519 Centre and at every meeting. Information line: 925-XTRA, ext. 2015.